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Director of Central Intelligence

Assistant Director for Operations

Air Force Project "Treasure Island" (Exploitation of Open Source
Slavic Publications)

1. The "Treasure Island" project, as proposed by the Department of the Air Force and forwarded by memo of the Director of Intelligence, USAF, dated 20 September 1948, has been studied by this Office and Foreign Documents Branch.

25X1 Although the memorandum of transmittal limits the project to "a program to extract basic air intelligence information from Slavic publications in the Library of Congress", and proposes "not a super extracting agency, but a modest effort in the air intelligence field", the Treasure Island brief discusses the larger problems of coordinating the proposed effort with other government agencies which are active in the field of processing foreign publications for intelligence information. It also suggests an allocation of sources and division of labor between the Library of Congress, the Army Library, and CIA, and mentions other organizations, such as the Aeronautical Chart Service and [] as possible participants in the over-all program. It recommends the establishment of a Basic Information Section in the Directorate of Intelligence USAF, to supervise a service for the extraction of information from Slavic open source materials, authorized to negotiate a contract with the Library of Congress for the processing of current and backlog material. In addition it states: "this administration, to be located in the Library of Congress, would control procurement of materials, maintain liaison with the Acquisitions Division in the Library, keep a central file, and publish the extracts. The administration would control the various extracting units, located in the Library of Congress and in other government agencies. The work would most advantageously be divided up in such a manner that each participating agency would handle one major category of open source materials."

It is felt that the functions of coordinating and controlling the various abstracting and publications procurement programs already undertaken by the IAC agencies and other government departments cannot properly be assumed by a new and subordinate unit of the Department of the Air Force. The complex problems of inter-agency coordination, control of procurement, and allocation of effort in regard to open source material require planning and action on a higher level. Under the provisions of Section 102 (d) 2 of the National Security Act and NSCID 3, Para. 1 a (Basic Intelligence) such action could more appropriately be taken by CIA.

2. Considered from the point of view of an operating unit (omitting the function of coordination), the mission of "the Treasure Island" project is not clearly defined. It discusses air intelligence requirements (para

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he, p. 10) and yet mentions the advisability of indexing all information in order to achieve complete coverage so that this would be available to another agency which might wish to participate in the program in the future (para 4f, p. 10). It suggests an organization of 76 people to accomplish this uncertain mission within five years, without relating the proposed workload to the figures quoted for the present backlog of publications and the current and future accessions of Slavic material. It does not define certain terms which it employs, although any estimate of workload depends upon the accurate definitions of such terms. For example, it uses "abstracting" and "extracting" apparently interchangeably and without differentiation. It also speaks of Slavic publications of all kinds without clarifying whether this includes material from all Satellite countries or Slavic countries only (omitting Hungary and Finland). It further mentions intelligence exploitation throughout, yet would place the major portion of the operation under contract with the Library of Congress, a non-intelligence agency and the second largest share of the operation under the Army Library, also a non-intelligence unit.

3. Accordingly, before an estimate of the work load can be made, the following premises must be established in line with the general tone of what accomplishment is desired:

a. That all intelligence material will be extracted except political and sociological.

b. That extracting or abstracting as used in the study means the reporting in English of all information of intelligence value appearing in all available Slavic language publications.

c. That Slavic publications are presumed to include only Polish, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Slovak and Bohemian in addition to Russian, and will exclude publications in the some one hundred and ten (110) non-Slavic languages used in the USSR.

d. That all information of intelligence value will be indexed, cross-indexed and filed.

e. That backlog figures as given in the study are accepted.

f. That all information extracted will be published and disseminated.

g. That uncleared personnel would be authorized for use in the operation.

4. Based on the above premises, the following figures can then be computed for the work involved:

a. Backlog (5-year plan)

(1) Newspapers (100,000). Experience has shown that the average extent of full cover ☐ Slavic language newspapers per day. Therefore, for 100,000 newspapers over a five-year period ☐ people would be required.

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5. It is apparent from the above computations that the [] abstractors proposed for the project (para 4e) or the tentative T/O of [] persons (Annex I) would be inadequate for the task. The [] abstractors could scarcely do more than make bibliographies and translate headlines and tables of contents in five years, and to expect them to handle current books and government reports simultaneously would be unrealistic.

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6. It must be concluded that the project would be limited to "the fields of economic and industrial information related to strategic vulnerability, technical air information, air arm and civil air information, biographical air information, and air geography," although the next paragraph (4f, p.10) indicates a much wider scope of subject matter. With regard to the statement "It would be a good selling point to have all the information indexed and cross-indexed so that extracts of any kind can be made", two questions arise:

a. Does this mean that information would be indexed previous to the extracting, i.e., using linguists for indexers?

b. Does "all the information" mean

- (1) all information from the limited categories above?
- (2) all information of intelligence value?
- (3) all information?

7. The following minor points in the Treasure Island study seem worth mentioning as contradictory, inaccurate, or open to disagreement:

a. Para 2b, (P. 6) mentions the lack of flow of information on open sources, but para 2c (3), p. 6, complains of the volume of the "uncoordinated digests" at present issued by various agencies.

b. Para 2c(2), (P. 6) states that "Most of the extracts are actually made by people unfamiliar with air intelligence requirements. Many digests, especially the Daily Reports on Foreign Radio Broadcasts, attempt to reproduce current news and propaganda, but consistently omit intelligence data." Monitored industrial and economic information is invariably included by FEIB in this publication within the limits of space and with regard to the relative importance of the information. FEIB is at present providing all "discards" containing such material not published in the Daily Report direct to the [] The Foreign Documents Branch, CIA, which abstracts foreign periodicals and newspapers on request, has not received any collection directives from the [] stating air intelligence requirements in this field.

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c. Para 2c(4), P. 6 does not take into account the recent activities of Foreign Documents Branch, CIA, with regard to books, maps, etc.

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d. Para 4b, (P. 2) is incorrect in stating that the Library of Congress is the "government's purchasing agent for foreign publications", since procurement of such material abroad is handled by the State Department.

e. Para 4d, (P. 2). The method of extracting by entering the information on check sheets with a limited number of pertinent questions is thought practicable only for target data and by no means applicable to the wider field of intelligence. At least 3/4 of the effort used in exploiting these documents would be wasted by this method. A steady stream of information reports flowing into the hands of well-qualified analysts as the result of definite collection directives is believed to be the most efficient method of handling foreign published material.

8. Conclusions:

a. The necessity for adequate intelligence exploitation of foreign publications to meet the specialized requirements of the Department of the Air Force, and especially those of the [redacted] is demonstrated by the "Treasure Island" paper. It is evident that the situation has hitherto been unsatisfactory. If such requirements had, however, been submitted to CIA and the desired form indicated, it is possible that the criticism implied in para 2b and c of the brief would not be valid.

b. The study attempts to find a solution which "1) avoids the setting-up of one independent super-extracting agency; 2) achieves a maximum of cooperation from existing agencies; 3) provides facilities for the carrying-out of such extracting services as are necessary if a complete coverage of open source materials is to be achieved."

c. It assumes the function of interagency coordination and postulates a preliminary survey of sources and source materials which must be made before a satisfactory plan for division of labor between participants can be evolved. It states "Such a preliminary job must needs be done by the Library of Congress which would have to be given a contract in order to enable them to complete their index of Slavic materials and to make full use of the Union Catalogue".

d. It confuses the results to be produced by this preliminary survey group in the Library of Congress with the body of extracted basic air intelligence information required by the [redacted] and with the solution of the problem as indicated in Para 8c above.

e. In view of the backlog figures and workload calculations outlined above, it is believed that the proposed Table of Organization of [redacted] people for the Library of Congress Unit is unrealistic.

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